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BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

ANNUAL REPORT

On the Health of the District for the year 1970

Presented by

The Medical Officer of Health

and

The Public Health Inspector and Surveyor

The Trident Press, Western Works, Taylor Square, Tavistock. Tel. 3320

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MARY E. BUDDING, M.B., Bch., B.Sc., D.P.H.

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T. F. BENNETT, M.A.P.H.I., A.I.P.H.E.

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BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

Annual Report on the Health of the Area during 1970

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I beg to present herewith the Annual Report on the Health of the Borough during 1970 in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Health and Social Security Circular 1/71. dated January 1971. Included in the Report is the Report of your Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.

The estimated population, mid year, showed an increase of 110 compared with 1969. The Standardised Birth Rate compared with 1969 increased (from 14.4 to 17.1) as the National Rate decreased slightly, (16.3 to 16.0). The Standardised Death Rate (15.1) remained stationary and above the national rate (11.7). The majority of deaths were from circulatory and cerebro-vascular diseases (40).

Your most outstanding need still remains accommodation for the elderly, and it is very much to be regretted that so far all efforts by your Council to obtain suitable building sites have failed.

The Regional Hospital Board having been persuaded to re-start monthly visits of the Mass Radiography Unit to the Borough, in October, in opposition to the official policy of contracting the service, it is to be hoped that these visits will be supported as there is a danger of the service being withdrawn should numbers attending not warrant continuation.

Lastly, no doubt work on the new Sewage Works will be commenced during 1971.

The general health of the population remains good and no epidemics occurred during the year.

Finally, I should like to thank the Mayor, Aldermen, Councillors and Staff for their continued consideration and support.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

Your obedient servant,

MARY E. BUDDING,

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION 'A'

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (statute acres)	786
Population—1951 census	3,899
Population—1961 census	3,864
Estimated home population—mid-1970	3,900
Number of inhabited dwellings	1,437
Rateable Value—1.4.70	£131,244
Product of the Penny Rate	£515
Loan debt.—31.3.70	£586,943

VITAL STATISTICS

	Male	Female	Total
Live Births			
Legitimate	30	25	55
Illegitimate	2	2	4
			59
Deaths	35	49	84

		England and Wales
Live Births...		
Number	59	
Crude rate per 1,000 population ...	15.1	16.0
Standardised Birth Rate	17.1	
Illegitimate Live Births (per cent of total births)	7%	8%
Still Births		
Number	2	
Rate per 1,000 total live/stillbirths	33	13
Total Live and Stillbirths	61	
Infant Deaths (deaths under 1 year)	1	
Infant Mortaliy Rates (deaths under 1 year of age)		
Infant deaths per 1,000 total live births	17	18
Legitimate infant deaths per 1.000 legitimate live births	18	17
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1.000 illegitimate live births	—	26
Neo-Natal Mortality Rates (deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 total live births)	17	12
Early Neo-Natal Mortality Rate (deaths under 1 week per 1,000 total live births)	17	11
Perinatal Mortality Rate (stillbirths and deaths under 1 week combined per 1,000 total live and stillbirths)	49	23
Maternal Mortality (including abortion)		
Number of deaths	Nil	
Rate per 1,000 total live and still-births	—	
Deaths		
Number of Deaths	84	
Crude death date per 1,000 population	21.5	11.7
Standardised death rate	15.1	

Population Year	Mid-Year Population	Birth Rate	Death Rate
1966	3,810	15.7	19.2
1967	3,810	12.6	16.8
1968	3,830	12.5	18.5
1969	3,790	12.7	21.1
1970	3,900	15.1	21.5

The Chief Causes of Death were as follows:

Malignant Neoplasms	15
Endocrine diseases	1
Heart diseases	25
Cerebro-vascular diseases	12
Other diseases of circulatory system	3
Influenza	1
Pneumonia	9
Bronchitis and emphysema	6
Accidents	2
Other diseases of genito-urinary system	4
Internal obstruction and hernia	1
Other diseases of digestive system	1
Nephritis and nephrosis	1
Disease of musculo-skeletal system	1
Suicide and self inflicted injuries	1
Birth Injury	1
TOTAL (all causes)	84

Age at Death Table

	Male	Female
Under 4 weeks	—	1
4 weeks and under 1 year	—	—
1—4	—	—
5—14	—	—
25—34	—	—
15—24	1	—
35—44	—	—
45—54	1	2
55—64	8	8
65—74	10	12
75 and over	15	26
	35	49

SECTION 'B'

1. Hospitals

There are two hospitals in the town. The Memorial Hospital (including maternity beds) and the Castle Hospital (for Chronic sick and Geriatric cases). Both of these serve the town and also the large rural area outside the town.

2. County Council Services

Under the National Health Service Act, 1946, the County Council provides the following services based largely on the Okehampton Health Centre, (Okehampton 2231) in the grounds of the Memorial Hospital, also providing accommodaton for the General Practitioners in the town; Domiciliary Midwifery, Home Nursing, Health Visitors, supervisory care of expectant and nursing mothers and children under 5, School Medical Service, Home Help Services, Chiropody, Occupation Therapy, Speech Therapy, Dental Service for Children up to school-leaving age, expectant and nursing mothers, Cervical Cytology and Family Planning Clinics, Mental Health Service. Vaccination and Immunisation procedures. The Orthopaedic Clinic is held each Monday on the premises. A Chest clinic is held regularly.

The Ambulance Service is run under delegated powers by the St. John Ambulance Brigade providing a 24-hour cover for the whole district.

3. Meals-on-Wheels

These continued to be provided by the W.R.V.S., sent out from the kitchen in Tenby House. The latter also runs a Luncheon Club and Day Club for members, and as many as possible are urged to come to the Luncheon Club whenever they can rather than eat alone at home.

4. War Memorial Hospital Maternity Unit

During the year 99 babies were born in the hospital. The majority of the babies born in the Borough were hospital confinements, as usual.

5. Laboratory Services

Bacteriological examinations of specimens and of samples of milk, water, ice cream, etc., are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Exeter, and any chemical analyses by the Public Analyst at Exeter.

6. Miniature Mass Radiography Unit

The Unit had ceased to visit Okehampton in 1969, but after persistent pressure by your Council and Medical Officer, it was agreed by the Regional Hospital Board that the Unit would once again make regular visits. These re-started in October and will continue every 4 weeks.

SECTION 'C'

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply Sources

Mr. E. A. Robb, the Chief Engineer of the North Devon Water Board has kindly supplied the following information of his Board's progress during the year:

"The supply to this area is derived from the Black-a-Ven and Red-a-Ven Rivers, the water receiving treatment in the form of filtration, pH adjustment and sterilization at Brackentor Treatment Works.

Hosepipe restrictions were not applied in the Borough."

Satisfactory chemical and bacteriological samples, taken at regular intervals, have been obtained:—

Brackentor Works—7 samples, all satisfactory.

Samples taken in the Borough—14, all satisfactory.

Rainfall Figures

Rainfall figures for the past five years as follows:—

	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
Cranmere				98.88	92.75
Newbridge				83.57	68.30
Filter Station			52.24	64.52	61.43
Pleasure Gardens	57.336	47.46	50.15	61.29	60.17
Dry Days (no rain)	113	129	159	139	130

The driest months were June and October and the wettest February and November and the heaviest rainfalls were April 20th 1.33" and 1.39" on December 2nd.

Sewerage

Outline approval having been given for a modern sewage disposal works for the Borough progress has been made throughout the year with the design of the scheme to meet Ministry and River Board requirements. Alterations in the Ministry procedures particularly in regard to the funding of the scheme have produced some delay but it is anticipated that it will be formally presented for approval shortly and that work on the scheme will commence towards the end of the 1971/72 financial year.

In the meantime every effort is made to secure the best possible use of the irrigation system to provide a good standard of effluent from the existing disposal arrangements.

Public Conveniences

Two main toilet blocks are available to the public, one near the main car park and one near the post office.

Every effort is made to maintain these in a clean and hygienic condition. Damage to toilet facilities during the year has not been a major problem although minor damage is caused periodically.

Rodent Control

Treatments of the sewer systems have again been carried out by the Council's staff in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. In this way effective control of rat infestation in the sewers is ensure and very little infestation has in fact been found during the year.

Seven complaints have been received and dealt with.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

The domestic refuse collection arrangements in the Borough continue to operate satisfactorily providing for one collection per week from all domestic premises.

All refuse continues to be burnt at the disposal tip as has been the case since the national outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease and the tip is bulldozed regularly to cover the burnt refuse and to maintain as tidy a surface as possible.

Since the available tipping space is gradually diminishing efforts have continued throughout the year to secure alternative tipping facilities. At the present time the possibility of providing joint tipping facilities with the Rural Authority is being investigated.

Frequent inspections continue to be made and very few problems from either rat or fly infestation have been encountered during the year, however periodic test treatments are carried out as a precautionary measure.

Inspection of the District and Public Health Services

The number of complaints regarding public health matters received, recorded and dealt with during the year was ten.

The following table sets out the inspections carried out during the year.

	Number of Inspections	Number of Informal Notices Served	Number of Informal Notices Complied With
Housing	80	4	4
Drainage	45	3	3
Food Premises	37	2	2
Public Cons.	30	—	—
Sewerage	73	—	—
Water Supply	3	—	—
Rivers	12	—	—
Refuse Disposal	69	—	—
Rodent Control	20	1	1
Moveable dwellings	12	—	—
Schools	—	—	—
Infectious Diseases	—	—	—
Petroleum Acts	16	—	—
Offices, Shops and Railway premises Act	40	5	5
Factories	20	—	—
Miscellaneous	162	—	—
TOTAL ...	619	15	15

Factories Act, 1961

Details of inspections carried out in accordance with the Factories Act, 1961 are set out in the tables which follow.

1. Inspections for Purposes of Provisions as to Health.
(including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		Occupiers Prosecuted
		Inspections	Written Notices	
(i) Factories in which 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	2	1	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	34	12	2	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding Out-workers' premises).	9	1	—	—
TOTAL	45	14	2	—

2. Cases in which Defects were found:

Particulars	*Number of cases in which defects were found*				*Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted*
	Found	*Remedied*	*Referred to H.M. Inspector*	*Referred by H.M. Inspector*	
Want of cleanliness	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding .	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature .	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation .	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors .	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary conveniences:					
(a) Insufficient .	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective .	2	2	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for the sexes .	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences (not including Outwork) .	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL .	2	2	—	—	—

3. Outwork (Sections 133 and 134)

Nature of Work	Section 133			Section 134		
	Number of Out-workers in August list required by section 133 (1) (c)	*Number of cases of default in sending lists to Council*	*Number of prosecutions for failure to supply lists*	*Number of instances of work in unwholesome premises*	*Notices served*	*Prosecutions*
Wearing Apparel (making etc.)	—	—	—	—	—	—

SECTION 'D'

HOUSING

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING & BUILDING REGULATIONS

Applications for permission to develop under the Town and Country Planning Acts, Advertisements Regulations, Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act and the Building Regulations have been received over the past twelve months as follows:—

Alterations and Conversions	27	
Advertisement Signs	3	
Public Works	2	
New Dwellings	4	
Garages	10	
Caravan Sites	1	(renewal)
Industrial and Shop Premises	7	

Of the above 6 applications have been refused.

Private Enterprise

Eight new houses were erected by private enterprise during the year.

Improvement Grants

(a) Standard Grants

Thirteen applications for Standard Improvement Grants under the provisions of the Housing Act, 1969 were received and approved. Six have been completed during the year.

(b) Improvement Grants

The Council's decision at the beginning of the year to consider application for Improvement Grants (Discretionary) on the basis of considering each application on its merits is a considerable step forward and one which should result in a general improvement over a period of housing standards in the Borough. The Council have wisely adopted a two stage procedure, firstly considering each scheme in outline prior to the submission by the applicant of formal details, thus applicants are aware before submitting details of their scheme whether or not the Council will approve the proposals in general and abortive work and expense can be avoided. Nineteen applications have been received during the year.

COUNCIL HOUSING

New Houses

No new dwellings have been provided during the year but 75 dwellings and 50 garages at the Moyses Meadow Estate, High Street continue to be in their defects maintenance period.

Old Peoples Dwellings

Despite all efforts during the year the Council have as yet not been able to secure a suitable site for old peoples accommodation. This is badly needed in the town and it is hoped that the coming year will see some progress in this direction.

Maintenance and Repairs

Normal maintenance and repairs have been carried out during the year and the majority, except electrical repairs, have been carried out by the Council's maintenance staff.

Repairs are carried out as speedily as possible and during the year 325 reports were received and/or dealt with.

Council House Improvements

During the year the complete re-roofing of 42 houses at Maceys and Brayhams Terraces has been carried out under the Improvement Contribution procedure. These houses which were built in the 1930's had roofs which were not felted and over the years had cost the Council considerable expense in attending to roof leaks. The provision of these new roofs should ensure that these houses provide a good standard of accommodation for at least the next 30 years.

SECTION 'E'

INSPECTION and SUPERVISION of FOOD

Food Premises

The number of food premises falling within the provision of the Food Hygiene Regulations are as follows:—

Grocers	12
Greengrocers	6
Confectioners	4
Bread and Cakes	5
Meat Shops	7
Fish Shops	3
Milk Shops	1
Dairies	2
Hotels and Bars	9
Cafes	7

Ice Cream and Preserved Foods

The number of premises registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 is as follows:—

Ice Cream	24
Preparation or manufacture of sausage or potted or pressed, pickled or preserved food intended for sale	7

Unsound Food

Twelve certificates for unsound food were issued during the year and 826-lbs. of miscellaneous food stuff condemned.

Slaughterhouses

There are now no slaughterhouses being used in the Borough.

Slaughter of Animals Act, 1958

Applications were received for licences or renewal of licences to slaughter, and in all three cases were granted.

Poultry Packing Premises

There are two premises within the Borough where poultry is slaughtered and processed and the through put of these premises during the year was 237,000.

SECTION 'F'

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Tuberculosis

No new cases were notified, and therefore the Register remains as before with 10 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (7 male and 3 female).

Infectious Diseases Notified by Medical Practitioners:

The only cases notified were 4 of measles. This small number may well be due to the measles vaccination programme carried out in 1968/69.

Food Poisoning

No cases were reported or suspected.